

IN GREECE AND SPAIN Workers, youth resist bankers' assault

By John Catalinotto

Workers and young people in Greece held a general strike and mass demonstrations June 15 to put up the strongest resistance so far to the relentless offensive by European bankers and billionaires against the working class on that continent. In Spain, too, more than a half million took to the streets on June 19.

Greece's left-wing labor confederation PAME held the third general strike of 2011 on June 15, protesting the government's newest plans to cut another 6.4 billion euros from the already existing austerity budget. PAME, which marched in 67 cities, represents about half the organized workers and has led the workers' struggle against the Troika.

Strikers encircled the presidential mansion, the premier's office and Parliament to stop the representatives from reaching the building to open debate on Prime Minister George Papandreou's new cuts.

A movement something like the one that recently occupied the central squares of cities in Spain was also in the streets with less clear political demands but still opposed to austerity. Communist Party (KKE) representatives left the debate in parliament to join the demonstration.

PAME Secretariat Member Alekos Arvanitidis told the crowd in Sytagma Square, "We refuse to recognize any debt." (www.kke.gr, June 16)

The PASOK regime, led by Papandreou, announced a shuffle of positions in the cabinet that same day, presenting it as a change. Though it showed the government felt mass pressure, the change was barely cosmetic.

The next day, the KKE held demonstrations in cities across Greece to show its complete lack of confidence in the government, to expose the "change" as meaningless and to insist that the working class had the right to refuse any sacrifice to help solve the bankers' debt crisis.

KKE Secretary General Aleka Papariga told the thousands rallying in Athens, "We must highlight what the business groups, monopolies, the EU and NATO owe to the people as do the bourgeois parties of ND and PASOK ... the people must not pay anything. The people must with their own hands take back what they are owed and what belongs to them." (www.kke.gr, June 17)

Banks wage class war against workers

The corporate media misrepresents the European capitalist offensive as an effort to discipline countries that allegedly "spend beyond their means" on social

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PHOTO: DESREALITAT.BLOGSPOT.COM

Barcelona, Spain,
June 19. Banner in
Catalan reads:

'The street is ours;
We won't pay for
their crisis.'

LGBTQ PRIDE

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'Bloombergville' brings world attention to massive cuts, layoffs

By Dee Knight

Bloombergville, New York City

June 19 — Launched on the heels of a massive public workers' rally on June 14, and inspired by gigantic occupations of public squares in Egypt, Tunisia, Spain, Greece and Wisconsin, the Bloombergville encampment near New York's City Hall has withstood police intimidation and inclement weather to mount a spirited and sustained protest against the current onslaught of anti-people budget cuts in New York City and state.

Bloombergville harks back to the "Hoovervilles" of the first years of the Great Depression, which were a response to the cold indifference of the pro-rich president. Hoover ignored the suffering of millions who lost

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New York City

June 18, City Hall, NYC.

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Victories won in struggle to protect sacred burial grounds

By Terri Kay
Vallejo, Calif.

On day 59 of the encampment to protect Sogorea Te — the sacred Shellmound ancient burial grounds at Glen Cove, Vallejo, Calif. — Native people from many reservations along with supporters gathered for a special Spiritual Gathering June 11. The Native nations represented included Cachil Dehe/Colusa Band of Wintu, Elem Pomo, Grindstone Wintu/Wailaki, Northern Chumash, Chemehuevi, Tuolumne Me-wuk, Pit River, Mai-du, Mono, Karkin Ohlone and Rumsen Ohlone.

Fred Short, American Indian Movement spiritual leader for California, opened the spiritual session. He talked about how their ancestors “fought and died to have our medicine.” He proudly stated that this is the 42nd anniversary of AIM. He called on people to write letters to the Heritage Commission and Gov. Jerry Brown to bring back the bodies stored in foot lockers and worse in Berkeley and Sonoma.

Short described a recent victory, where the local homeowners’ association wrote a resolution declaring that they don’t want a park here. (Sogorea Te is situated at the end of a cul-de-sac in a relatively new upscale community.) They said they hadn’t been told, when they had been promised a park, that it was an ancient burial ground for Indigenous tribes.

The association is planning to submit their resolution to a local newspaper for publication. They have also been bringing food and water to the encampment. Short said, “I know we’ve won now.”

Corrina Gould, from the Karkin/Chochenyo Ohlone Nation, spoke with enthusiasm about how the struggle has brought people from all walks of life here. She said they have been working on this for 12 years. She talked about the sacrifices some had made, even losing their jobs and homes. She described how they went to



WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

Ancient Native burial site.

the Greater Vallejo Recreation District and asked them not to desecrate this land and how they picked up 350 pounds of trash from the site. She said, “We didn’t pick this place; our ancestors did.”

Gould also announced a significant recent victory. The Native activists had demonstrated at the offices of the Bay Trails in Oakland, Calif., asking them to withdraw their support for the park project. Bay Trails conceded and pulled back their \$200,000 grant!

Wounded Knee, an Indigenous activist, talked with deep emotion about how the ancestors came here 4,000 years ago. He called for the end of desecration of sacred places — not putting sacred things in museums and garbage cans. He said this struggle “wasn’t about winning or losing, but about the ancestors who had stood up and protected our people.” He called on Indigenous people to take a stand. He noted that activists had spent 58 days in the cold, wind and rain, and “spirit” had brought them through.

Short said, “I don’t argue and fight, but I will die for this.” He urged people to write letters to their senators and President Barack Obama to sign the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights of Indigenous People. Supporters can also help by making donations to cover court costs at <https://www.wepay.com/donate/137138> and signing the online petition at <http://www.petitiononline.com/ssprit/petition.html>. Read previous articles on this struggle; go to workers.org. □

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Growing LGBTQ solidarity with Palestine as struggles erupt

By LeiLani Dowell and Shelley Ettinger

Over the last few years, as the movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions of Israel (BDS) has gathered steam in the U.S. and throughout the world, the apartheid state of Israel has turned to various tactics in an attempt to counter the growing solidarity with the Palestinian people. One such strategy is to portray Israel as the only place in the Middle East that is friendly to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer people.

The tactic, dubbed “pinkwashing” by progressive pro-Palestinian LGBTQ forces, relies on a broad-brushed slander of the entire Arab and Muslim world, which is presented as “backward.” It is further based on the egregious lie that the Israeli settler state treats LGBTQ Palestinians equally to LGBTQ Israelis. Pinkwashing not only serves to legitimize the Israeli state but also reinforces U.S. imperialist propaganda, which claims that the U.S. wages war in an effort to “liberate” LGBTQ peoples and women in the Middle East and throughout the world — even as LGBTQ peoples face police brutality, added economic hardship and denial of social services here in the U.S.

A big and growing pushback of LGBTQ forces in solidarity with Palestine is challenging the pinkwashing effort on several fronts. In Palestine, three groups — alQaws for Sexual & Gender Diversity in Palestinian Society, Aswat-Palestinian Gay Women and Palestinian Queers for BDS — issued a call to action in early June demanding that the International LGBTQ Youth and Student Organisation rescind its plans to hold its general assembly in Tel Aviv in December.

In the call, these Palestinian LGBTQ activists pointed out: “Israeli policies and occupation do not distinguish between queer and straight. All Palestinians — queer and straight — must deal with the effects of the apartheid wall, checkpoints, and illegal settlements and settlers violence, not to mention living under Israeli military law that strip them of their rights as civilians. All Gazans, including queers, live under medieval and illegal siege in the



NEW YORK, 2009

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

de-facto open-air prison that is the Gaza strip. And like all Palestinian citizens of Israel, queers are subject to institutionalized discrimination in laws, education, and throughout their public and private lives.” (<http://www.bdsmovement.net>)

As the realities, described by these activists, draw more and more people into solidarity with Palestine, pro-Zionist forces have increasingly attempted to silence the voices of LGBTQ forces that raise awareness of the Palestinian struggle. In Canada in 2009, an attempt to ban the group Queers Against Israeli Apartheid from marching in that city’s Pride parade was defeated by the group and its allies. Some 200 people marched in QuAIA’s contingent that year.

This year, struggles have erupted on both U.S. coasts to demand BDS and the visibility of Palestinian solidarity. Palestinian Queers for BDS has called for a boycott of the San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival, taking place June 16-26. Frameline, the festival’s presenter, has accepted funding for the festival from the Israeli Consulate for the second year in a row. A highly organized campaign by a broad coalition of queer organizations, including Queers Undermining Israeli Terrorism, has called on Frameline to reject the money as a part of the BDS campaign.

Stonewall means ‘fight back,’ solidarity with oppressed

Members of New York City’s LGBTQ communities are continuing a struggle for inclusion at the city’s LGBT community center. After intense pressure from a small, highly organized cohort of racist



PHILADELPHIA, 2010

PHOTO: KELLY VALDEZ



SAN FRANCISCO, 2010

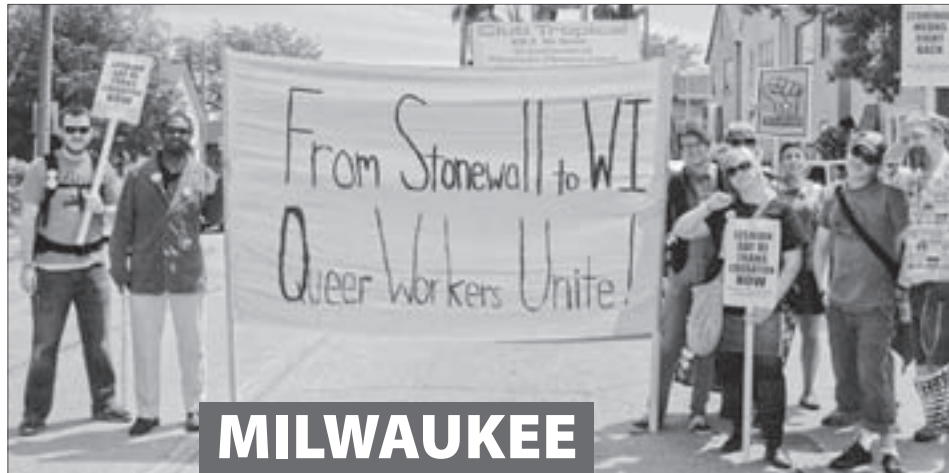
WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

which we struggle such as racial justice, anti-imperialism, immigration, economic justice, disability justice and militarization are not genuinely welcome to be discussed at the NYC LGBT Community Center.” (<http://alp.org/>)

After several maneuvers back and forth on the issue, the Center has announced that no group relating to the so-called “Israel/Palestine issue” will be allowed to meet there. Despite the thin veneer of language suggesting that both sides are being treated equally, many LGBTQ activists see the Center’s caving in to Zionist forces as a racist attack on Palestinian LGBTQ people and a political attack on the growing support for BDS and Palestine solidarity.

A group called Queers for an Open LGBT Center has formed and has organized a protest of the Garden Party, the Center’s annual fundraising party, on June 20. Meanwhile, New York Queers Against Israeli Apartheid, another group that has been expelled by the Center’s new guidelines, marched in the Pride celebrations in the boroughs of Queens on June 5 and Brooklyn on June 11, and plans to march in Manhattan Pride on June 26. □

Broad support at Pride march



MILWAUKEE

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

At Milwaukee’s LGBT Pride march June 12, Bail Out the People Movement activists marched with the spirited “From Stonewall to WI: Queer Workers United” contingent. The contingent included Milwaukee public school teachers, university workers, and other public workers, students and community members.

Onlookers and passersby enthusiastically greeted the contingent and joined in chants of “2, 4, 6, 8, support our workers gay or straight!” Other progressives in-

cluded Planned Parenthood Wisconsin, progressive faith groups, numerous lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer organizations and others.

The contingents were part of the burgeoning people’s uprising in Wisconsin that is fighting union-busting and other anti-people attacks.

For more information on how to assist the people’s struggle in Wisconsin, go to www.wisafclcio.org, www.vdlf.org, or www.wibailoutpeople.org.

— Ben Carroll

Celebrity voices champion LGBTQ rights, reject bigotry

By Caleb T. Maupin

As the battle for equal marriage rights for lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer people in New York state and elsewhere heats up, many famous people from entertainment, sports and other cultural fields are making their support public for LGBTQ rights.

Actors like George Takei, Joan Rivers, Uma Thurman, Fran Drescher, Vanessa Williams, Daphne-Rubin Vega, Lucy Liu and Whoopi Goldberg have loudly joined the call for LGBTQ rights. Comedian and actor Tracy Morgan recently apologized for anti-LGBTQ remarks he has made during past comedy routines and asserted that he supports the right of LGBTQ people to marry.

Michael Strahan, former defensive end for the New York Giants and Super Bowl champion, has announced his support for marriage equality. In doing so he joined other famous figures from the athletic world, such as Steve Nash of the Phoenix Suns and Sean Avery of the New York Rangers, who recently declared

their support for LGBTQ rights.

The forces of bigotry and reaction in New York have responded bitterly to the number of prominent individuals who defend LGBTQ rights. For example, right-wing State Assembly Member Dov Hikind made a point of insulting Lady Gaga for supporting LGBTQ rights.

Hikind, a supporter of racial profiling and former member of the Jewish Defense League, a right-wing terrorist group, waved around a large photograph of Lady Gaga during an anti-LGBTQ tirade on the statehouse floor. However, Lady Gaga is not alone among musicians. Cyndi Lauper, another famous singer, recently announced her support for the cause.

Polls show that among New York state residents there is a strong base of support for the cause of total equality for the LGBTQ community.

As in every progressive movement the supporting voices of celebrities are always important and helpful to those in the streets who are demanding justice from the halls of prominence and power. □



The Lavender and Red series of articles by Leslie Feinberg, author of *Stone Butch Blues*, is now available online. The series includes:

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<http://www.workers.org/lavender-red/>



‘Make the banks pay!’

Conference takes aim at banks’ role in Detroit’s decline

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Detroit

A conference entitled “How the Banks Destroyed Detroit: Make the Banks Pay” was held here at the United Auto Workers Local 22 hall on June 11. The event was sponsored by the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs, which has been demanding a halt to home seizures and placing a freeze on the payment of debt service to the banks by the city of Detroit.

The conference took up some of the major issues facing the city and other urban areas throughout the U.S. Attorney and activist Jerry Goldberg chaired the gathering’s morning session and outlined the role of financial institutions that forced 237,000 people from Detroit within the last decade.

Goldberg noted that the same banks that engaged in predatory lending and fraud got trillions of dollars from the government but refuse to modify homeowners’ loans. At the same time, the banks get paid full value for the so-called “toxic assets” when they force working people from their homes.

Goldberg pointed out, “There is no money for schools, students or teachers while 87 percent of state school funds go directly to the financial firms. Even the casino tax revenues, once touted as the salvation of the city, go directly to a trustee who pays out debt service to the banks.

“At one point Detroit was the leading city for home ownership among workers, particularly African Americans. Today it is at the bottom,” Goldberg said.

Labor historian and People Before Banks Coalition organizer Steve Babson gave a PowerPoint presentation on the history of the struggle against economic injustice in Detroit, including the example of the Unemployed Councils in the 1930s, which organized communities to stop evictions and place people back in their homes.

Congressmember Hansen Clarke congratulated the Moratorium NOW! Coalition for pioneering the work around housing as a human right. Clarke will submit a bill in the House of Representatives to impose a national moratorium on foreclosures.

Attorney Vanessa Fluker, a specialist on home foreclosure law, spoke on how

government-controlled Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are guaranteed to receive payment for defaulted home loans at the full value of the mortgage. Fluker noted there is no incentive for banks to modify loans if they reap the inflated value of the mortgage when people are thrown out of their homes.

Banks & city services

Cheryl LaBash, a retired city worker, talked about the impact of the banks on the status of civil servants. She noted that issuing Pension Obligation Bonds by Detroit further heightened the municipal budget deficit. The bond rating agencies control the value of city borrowing from the financial institutions, and consequently Detroit is deeply indebted to the banks due to the high cost of borrowing and the usurious interest rates charged to the taxpayers.

Susan Schnur, a bus driver and member of the Amalgamated Transit Union, discussed how cuts have had a severe impact on public transportation in Cleveland where she resides. “Transit cuts determine which neighborhoods will be saved and the ones that will be destroyed.”

Schnur also discussed the attacks on public employees that have taken place in Ohio. The state passed similar legislation to that recently upheld in Wisconsin, which would eliminate collective bargaining for public employees and bust the unions.

Bob Day, an attorney who works for Wayne County Legal Services, noted that many developers are buying up foreclosed and abandoned homes in Detroit for a dollar from the banks. Then they sell these homes on land contracts that are fraudulent.

“One corporation in South Carolina bought 2,000 abandoned homes in Detroit, and if people default on the land contract deals, they are swiftly evicted from the properties. The consumers are often stuck with large water bills and back taxes that run into the thousands of dollars,” Day told the crowd.

Detroit City Councilperson JoAnn Watson supported the demand for a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions. She reported on her proposal for the allocation of \$10 billion from the federal government to rebuild Detroit in the same way a Marshall Plan was enacted in Europe to foster



WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

Anti-foreclosure activists, attorneys Vanessa Fluker and Jerry Goldberg, June 11.

development after World War II.

Steve Tobocman, a representative of the Michigan Foreclosure Task Force and former state representative, warned of efforts underway in the current state legislature to reduce the redemption period for foreclosed homes from six to three months.

Lisa Franklin of Warriors on Wheels discussed the deplorable conditions of the city’s para-transit service, which forces people with disabilities to wait sometimes up to three hours for connecting transportation. The city is still plagued with lack of accessibility for people in wheelchairs.

Other speakers included Derek Thacker of the Detroit chapter of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), who pointed out that student loan debt has now surpassed credit card debt in the U.S. Bryan Pfeifer, an organizer of the Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement, reported on the tremendous fightback against austerity and union busting now going on in that state.

Setting action agenda

Ben Carroll, a youth organizer from North Carolina, discussed the struggle of public sector workers in the state and the need to organize the South, which is still a bastion of low-wage labor and racism. Carroll said the Democratic National Convention will be held in Charlotte, N.C., in September 2012.

The Detroit conference agreed to a resolution calling for convening an “International Tribunal on the Crimes Committed

by the Banks” that would coincide with the DNC in Charlotte. The city is home to the headquarters of Bank of America, one of the worst culprits in the foreclosure crisis.

Autoworker and UAW activist Martha Grevatt talked about how the bailout of the auto industry created further opportunities to lower workers’ wages and cut benefits (see accompanying article). She pointed to the two-tier wage system as a means to break down solidarity among workers and to maximize profits for the auto companies.

The participants in the conference passed several action proposals, including support for a resolution sponsored by Wayne County Commissioner Martha G. Scott to halt sheriff mortgage sales in the county.

It was also agreed to produce 50,000 leaflets for distribution in southeast Michigan demanding a moratorium on foreclosures, evictions, utility shut-offs and payment of debt service to the banks. A hearing proposed by City Councilperson JoAnn Watson to coincide with the 44th anniversary of the Detroit rebellion of 1967 was endorsed.

The conference voted to demand a moratorium on student loan debt and the advancement of demands that prohibit school closings and teacher layoffs in Michigan.

The conference agreed to reconvene in September to assess progress made and lessons learned from the implementation of the action proposals. □

Because of mass pressure

County leaders support foreclosure moratorium

Special to Workers World
Detroit

One hundred fifty people attended an evening hearing on June 13 of the Wayne County Commission Ways and Means Committee to express their support for the Homeowner Protection and Neighborhood Preservation Act introduced by Commissioner Martha G. Scott at the initiative of the People Before Banks Coalition.

The act calls on the county to conduct an investigation of the impact of mortgage fraud and racist predatory lending in Michigan’s Wayne County, which includes the city of Detroit. It urges the sheriff to place a one-year moratorium on foreclosure sales in Wayne County, and to put the issue of the sheriff placing such a moratorium on the November ballot.

At the hearing, powerful testimony was given by homeowners who have lost their homes in foreclosure and neighborhood residents who told of the massive blight and loss of property values due to the foreclosure epidemic.

Auto Workers Civil Rights chair Miguel Foster read a statement on behalf of the union in support of the act. The Rev. David Bullock, chair of Operation PUSH, and the Rev. Ed Rowe, pastor of Central United Methodist Church, spoke out forcefully in support of a foreclosure moratorium, as did progressive attorneys from Michigan Legal Services, the United Community Housing Coalition and the Legal Aid and Defenders Office who fight every day in court on behalf of those losing their homes.

The powerful testimony forced every Wayne County Commissioner who attended the hearing to publicly express their support for the act, a turnaround from the wavering that had been previously noted. While the act would not be binding on the sheriff, Commissioner Bernard Parker noted that if the sheriff refused to implement the foreclosure moratorium the commission could exert pressure through its control of his budget.

At a meeting with coalition activists later that week Sheriff Benny Napoleon pledged his neutrality on the commission vote and the public referendum on the foreclosure moratorium to give an opportunity for the people to be heard on this critical issue. Coalition activists explained to the sheriff that the resolution and ref-

erendum would gather national attention, and would put him in a strong position to resist any attempts by the banks and financial institutions to derail the foreclosure moratorium after it was implemented.

Wayne County has been one the hardest-hit counties by the foreclosure epidemic. More than 69,000 homes in the Detroit area received delinquency or foreclosure notices in 2009 (foreclosure-deals.com Feb. 9, 2010) and metropolitan Detroit recorded 43,541 foreclosures in 2010, the third highest number of any metropolitan area in the U.S. (Detroit News, Jan. 27) The foreclosures are continuing unabated, with Realtytrac reporting over 2,700 foreclosure filings in Wayne County in April. □

ON THE PICKET LINE

By Sue Davis

NYC-area Macy's workers win decent contract

The silk suits at Macy's flagship store in New York City and stores in the Bronx, Queens and Westchester County had the audacity to offer a ruthless cutback contract to 4,000 members of Local 1-S of the Department Store union. But RWDSU fought back by exposing Macy's corporate greed. At the same time that workers are earning on average \$11 per hour, which is \$421.50 for a 37.5-hour week, or \$21,450 a year, Macy's CEO pocketed \$15 million last year, and the national retailer banked \$847 million in profits.

When Macy's proposed a contract that would raise the workers' health care costs; arbitrarily shift full-time workers to part-time, making it impossible to support families; and lower the hourly starting salary from \$8.50 to \$7.50, RWDSU members voted unanimously to strike when the contract expired on June 15. And they appealed to the public for support at a militant rally in Herald Square on June 8.

The strategy worked. Not only will RWDSU workers see an increase of 65 cents an hour in the first year, for a total of \$3.05 over the five-year contract, but the cost of some health care plans will be lower than before and full-time employees will be guaranteed 37.5 hours a week, with part-time employees guaranteed 28 hours.

RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum called the terms "symbolic" in a union-busting climate. "All we hear is that working people have to give concessions ... and just feel lucky to have any job at all. These negotiations serve as an important symbol for working people in New York that you can make gains for yourself and your family" if you fight back! (New York Times, June 17)

Nurses march on D.C., demand national agenda

Chanting "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Wall Street greed has got to go," several thousand nurses, union members and community allies marched from the White House to the Chamber of Commerce to the Capitol on June 7 demanding a "Main Street Contract for the American People." Organized by National Nurses United, which represents thousands of nurses from coast to coast, the protest linked continuing economic hardship to broad declines in health and living standards for working families. The NNU proposal calls for good jobs at living wages, guaranteed health care for all, equal access to quality education, good housing, protection from hunger, a secure retirement for everyone, a clean and safe environment, and a fair and just tax system in which "Wall Street and those with the most wealth pay their fair share." (Union City, online newsletter of D.C. Metro Council AFL-CIO, June 8) The NNU plans to bring its demands to Wall Street on June 22.

NYC hotel room attendants rally

When former head of the International Monetary Fund Dominique Strauss-Kahn was arraigned for sexually attacking a hotel room attendant on May 14, he had to walk a gauntlet of 200 angry women hotel workers, all of whom were women of color and many immigrants. The June 6 rally was organized by the New York Hotel and Motel Trades Council, UNITE-HERE Local 6, which has 30,000 members in New York City. Local 6, which represents workers in about 75 percent of all hotels in the city's five boroughs, has contracts that provide extensive due-process rights. An article entitled "Union Maid" in the June 6 American Prospect pointed out: "The fact that a Guinean immigrant housekeeper could report an assault by the hotel's most powerful guest at the time without fearing reprisals is testament to the importance of the union." The article described harassment and sexual abuse of about 250,000 housekeepers as "epidemic" in the U.S. hotel industry. There's only one solution: Organize and fight back!

Support nuclear workers locked out for a year

A year ago the 230 workers who process uranium for use in nuclear fuel at a Honeywell plant in Metropolis, Ill., rejected a contract that would eliminate 45 jobs, seniority, overtime pay, pensions, retiree medical benefits and weaken work rules. Honeywell retaliated on June 28, 2010, by locking out the members of Steelworkers Local 7-669. Now, after standing tall and garnering widespread support from U.S. and European unions, the workers will mark the one-year anniversary of their struggle for a decent contract with a march and rally on June 25.

Continued on page 11

The banks & the attack on the UAW

By Martha Grevatt

The following are excerpts from a talk given at the conference on "How the Banks Destroyed Detroit and How to Fight Back" held June 11 at the United Auto Workers Local 22 hall in Detroit.

In 2009, fearing a total collapse of all three U.S. auto companies, the United Auto Workers swallowed big concessions that were part of the Loan Service Agreements between Chrysler and General Motors and the U.S. Treasury. The LSA included a number of plant closings and the freezing of new hire wages at \$14 an hour until 2015. President Barack Obama hailed the creation of a "leaner, meaner and more competitive" auto industry.

Who were Obama's advisers? They were all from finance capital. Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner's resume showed years of service to the Treasury and the Federal Reserve Bank under both Republican and Democratic administrations. The White House Auto Task Force was led by two Wall Street personalities, Stephen Rattner and Ron Bloom. Rattner was an executive with Lehman brothers, Morgan Stanley and Lazard Freres before starting his own firm. Bloom also spent time at Lazard. Task Force member Diana Farrell worked for Goldman Sachs before joining the McKinsey Institute think tank. She is the author of "Market Unbound: Unleashing Global Capitalism."

Lawrence Summers was chair of Obama's National Economic Council. Best known for his sexist comments made during his tenure at Harvard, where he also engaged in racist abuse of renowned scholar Cornel West, Summers at one time was chief economist of the World Bank, where he advocated austerity cuts and privatization. During

his stints with the Treasury he consistently pushed banking deregulation, which allowed out-of-control speculation.

Besides union concessions, which represented a huge transfer of wealth from the workers who produce vehicles to the bosses and bankers, the other "achievement" of the task force was the Fiat-Chrysler alliance. Fiat is about to become the majority shareholder in Chrysler. The Treasury initially gave Fiat 20 percent ownership, which has now grown to 30 percent, and will be 35 percent by year's end.

Fiat acquired another 16 percent for \$1.27 billion, which all went toward paying back the government loan. The fund for UAW retiree health care benefits — the voluntary employee beneficiary association, VEBA — has seen its share shrink with no cash compensation. One of the contract changes demanded by Treasury was that half the VEBA be funded with Chrysler stock. The increase in Fiat's share was to come primarily from the VEBA's majority share — at no cost to the Italian company!

Fiat is buying the 6.6 percent share held by the U.S. government for about half a billion dollars. For \$75 million Fiat bought from the Treasury the right to force the VEBA, when it sells its stake, to sell it to Fiat for \$5 billion. It's likely Fiat will also acquire the last 1.7 percent held by the Canadian and Ontario governments. Fiat borrowed enough money from private lenders, led by none other than Goldman Sachs, to buy up Chrysler and pay back high-interest government loans six years early.

Union must break the box

Last fall, Rattner quoted Fiat and Chrysler CEO Sergio Marchionne as stating that "the UAW has to get used to a culture of poverty." (<http://tinyurl.com/27kl8cj>) Wall

Street and the capitalist state have backed this stance by facilitating an easy, low-cost acquisition of Chrysler.

Meanwhile, GM paid back a portion of the Treasury loans through an Initial Public Offering, reducing the Treasury's ownership to less than a third. The underwriters? Morgan Stanley and JPMorgan Chase. As underwriters they were granted the option, which they exercised, to buy billions of dollars' worth of GM stock.

The Treasury does not plan to hold on to its remaining GM stock. The state took temporary control to streamline operations and extract more wealth from the hides of the workers. Billions in lower wages and benefits meant a \$4.7 billion profit for GM last year — and billions in interest, "servicing" fees and stock dividends for Wall Street. Now that it's done the bankers' dirty work, the Treasury can make its exit.

Ford, with huge loans from Wall Street — especially Ford's long-time friends at Goldman Sachs — imposed a slightly less austere round of concessions in 2009 without government help. Its 2010 profits were \$6.6 billion.

The UAW leadership, which is going into negotiations in July, is in a state of ideological paralysis. Their orientation is to take what they can get, the priority being to make the companies profitable and competitive. It's not that they aren't thinking outside the box. Their thinking is the box.

The union must learn to operate from the premise that profit is theft — what the banks and the company owners (including banks) steal from us. From there we need a fightback strategy that engages the rank and file, their families and communities.

Grevatt is a long-time Chrysler UAW worker. Email: mgrevatt@workers.org

Trenton, N.J.

Thousands protest attacks on collective bargaining

In the face of mass protests outside the hearing room and disruptions within, the New Jersey Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee passed a bill destroying the right of public sector unions to collectively bargain over health care and pension issues. About 500,000 state and municipal workers will be affected. (AP, June 17)

While this measure is part of a national campaign to limit or destroy unions, what is unusual about New Jersey is that both Democrats and Republicans are cooperating with Republican Gov. Chris Christie on the bill. The Democrats control both houses of the state legislature. Senate President Stephen Sweeney, who lists his occupation as organizer for the ironworker's union, is a sponsor of the bill.

Thousands of workers held a raucous and angry protest outside the hearing in Trenton, New Jersey's capital. Twenty-five union

members, including New Jersey State AFL-CIO President Charles Wowkanech and Secretary-Treasurer Laurel Brennan, stood up as the vote was about to be taken, locked arms and chanted "Kill the bill" and "Workers' rights are human rights." They were then arrested.

"It is with a heavy heart that we even had to be here today to testify against a piece of legislation that would destroy collective bargaining rights for thousands of taxpaying working men and women," Wowkanech said. (NJ AFL-CIO)

"Only through collective bargaining do workers have a voice — and those who vote for this legislation will be voting to silence the voices of approximately 500,000 workers," Wowkanech warned the state Senate committee.

Wowkanech noted that the current negative economic conditions were not created by workers. They were created by the greed of Wall

Street profiteers, but workers are being blamed.

Both the state and municipal pension and health plans are underfunded by billions of dollars in the long run, although it appears they can continue to meet their current obligations.

While the unions are breathing fire and brimstone about "Chris Christie Democrats," there is little they can do about them electorally. The primary season is over in New Jersey, and the opponents of these rotten Democrats are rotten Republicans.

According to the June 16 issue of Business Week, there is an additional wrinkle in this attack. Christie wants to stop paying public workers for unused sick and vacation days, which adds up to \$825 million. This is a benefit that was granted by public employees at the bargaining table — it shouldn't be taken away by executive fiat.

— G. Dunkel

Rallies supports activists targeted by FBI

LOS ANGELES

Social justice activists held a militant protest in front of the Alhambra Court House in Los Angeles County June 16 at the hearing for Carlos Montes. The Chicano activist faces charges that arose from a 5 a.m. raid by Los Angeles County sheriffs and the FBI on May 17.

Mirroring recent FBI raids against anti-war and solidarity activists in the Midwest, political documents, computers and cell phones were confiscated from Montes, a member of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization. FRSO has been the primary target of the FBI raids for participating in legal international solidarity actions.

International Action Center organizer Scott Scheffer, who attended the hearing, told Workers World: “We could hear the protest outside loud and clear and it seemed that the cops and judge were trying to appear to be extra nice, asking Carlos if he needed anything and saying they don’t want any problems and just wanted to move things along smoothly.”

In spite of the friendly tone by the court staff, Montes now faces six additional felony charges. He received a court continuance for July 7.

When Montes came out of the court, he was greeted with chants to drop the charges and cheers of admiration. He told supporters and the media: “They took documents going back 40 years involving the Chicano movement, the immigrant rights movement and more. Now they are trying to throw the book at me. But I’m smiling because I see you all here.”

Montes explained that when he asked

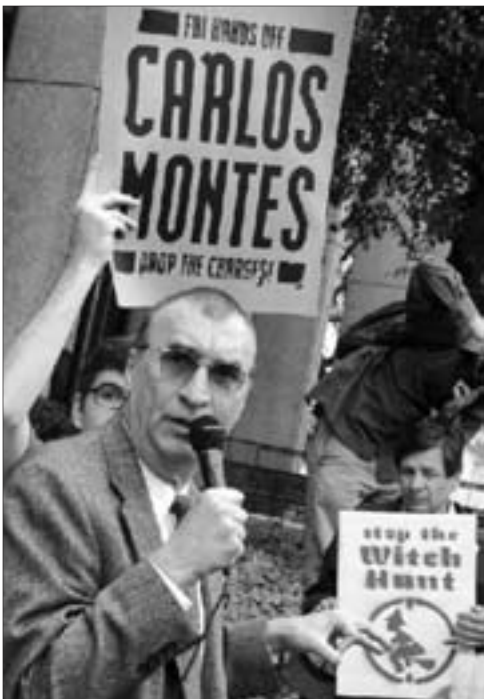


PHOTO: ROBERT STUART LOWDEN/LA INDYMEDIA

Carlos Montes, June 16.

for copies of their charges, the district attorney at first refused, but was forced to relinquish redacted copies, per instructions from the judge.

“This is part of the attacks nationally by the FBI in which my name was mentioned in their warrants. This is a political attack against our strong stand denouncing U.S. warmongering and intervention in Colombia, Mexico and against the U.S. support of the Israeli government that is oppressing Palestinian people.

“July 7 at 9 a.m. we’ll be here again — we must keep the pressure on Eric Holder and the grand jury, call him and sign the online petition,” Montes said.

— John Parker

OAKLAND, CALIF.

Chants of “Solidarity is not a crime, from Colombia to Palestine” reverberated off towering federal building walls in the Oakland, Calif., City Center during rush hour on June 16.

More than 14 demonstrations were held across the country to protest the ongoing grand jury witchhunt against solidarity activist communities in this country. Today’s protests marked the first court appearance of subpoenaed Chicano activist Carlos Montes in Los Angeles.

“The FBI and the Department of Justice have now brought this attack home to California with the arrest of Carlos, and we will not tolerate being bullied into silence by the federal government,” said Corina Pedraza, a member of the Bay Area Committee to Stop FBI Repression, which organized today’s demonstration. “We will protest and continue to speak out for our rights to organize,” Pedraza added.

The FBI began its latest blatant harassment of social justice activists in September 2010, when it raided the homes of seven Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul activists and the offices of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Anti-War Committee. After seizing a voluminous amount of books, computers, personal papers, newspapers and even children’s art, 23 activists were subpoenaed and called before the grand jury.

Montes, a member of Freedom Socialist Road Organization and a long-time activist for immigrant rights and Chicano liberation in Southern California, was the most recent victim of an early-morning SWAT team raid by armed policemen on May 17.

Monadel Herzallah of the U.S. Palestin-

ian Communities Network charged that the FBI is leading an “attack on the Arab and Muslim community. We are here today to support Carlos Montes and to say that we won’t be used as scapegoats to crush civil rights movements for justice.”

Richard Brown of the San Francisco 8, a group of ex-Black Panther Party members who were targeted by the FBI and grand jury for their anti-racist organizing, challenged the crowd to keep organizing to fight repression. “Never cooperate with the FBI,” Brown stated.

The Bay Area Committee to Stop FBI Repression is organizing community meetings and other events in support of all the subpoenaed activists and against continued FBI harassment of political movements. For more information, go to www.stopfbi.net.

— Report & photo by Judy Greenspan

MILWAUKEE

As part of the national day of solidarity with Carlos Montes and the other 23 international solidarity activists raided by the FBI since September 2010, protesters came out to Milwaukee’s Federal Courthouse June 16. Chants included, “Stop the grand juries,” and, “From Colombia to Palestine: Solidarity is not a crime.” Members of SDS Milwaukee, Committee To Stop FBI Repression, International Action Center, Latin American Solidarity Committee, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association-AFT, Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement, Welfare Warriors and Workers World Party participated.

— Bryan G. Pfeifer

Ohioans say no to anti-union SB5



Anti-Issue 5 rally, Columbus, April 9.

In the latest report by the Ohio AFL-CIO, over 700,000 signatures of registered voters have been collected to put the recall of Ohio Senate Bill 5 on the November ballot. SB 5 would essentially destroy public sector unions. Also known as Issue 5, this union-busting bill was passed and signed into law in Ohio by the current multimillionaire governor, John Kasich. This law especially targeted teachers as the villains in the current economic crisis.

When the bill was introduced in January, tens of thousands of unionists and their supporters poured into the capital of Columbus to “kill the bill.” Unlike Wisconsin, however, there is a way to recall the bill through referendum.

The referendum process is hard. Over 220,000 signatures must be collected in 90 calendar days in at least 44 of the 88 Ohio counties. But this requirement has

proved to be no problem. Everywhere in the state, working people volunteered to gather signatures and to say, “Ohio is a UNION STATE!”

In a sampling of the petitions gathered by the umbrella group “We are Ohio,” over 60 percent of the signatures are valid. And, of course, the workers at the various boards of election are public sector unionists.

Now the real work will begin. Right-wingers like Kasich and their super-rich backers are mobilizing to keep Issue 5 alive and thus pave the way to privatize as much of Ohio as they can.

But working people in Ohio are organizing. The effort to destroy all that workers have built and depended on, such as public schools, the Ohio toll road, universities and public hospitals, must be defeated. This referendum victory is the first step. No on 5!

— Report and photo by Susan Schnur

‘Bloombergville’ brings world attention to massive cuts, layoffs

Continued from page 1

their jobs and homes due to Wall Street speculators driven by capitalist greed.

Bloombergville is also inspired by “Walkervilles” that have sprung up around the state of Wisconsin, protesting Gov. Walker’s attacks on workers’ rights to collective bargaining and efforts to impose austerity there.

Bloombergville’s second day was marked by a massive march of New York’s construction trades workers, more than 25,000 strong. They made history twice in a single day: first by enthusiastic solidarity with the Bloombergville protesters, and then by a bold breakout from police barriers meant to cage them in

and blunt their protest. Both cases were a break from the past.

Observers compared this new mood to the days of Vietnam War-era protests, when President Nixon used a handful of right-wing, all-white construction workers to bash protesters and drive a wedge between them in the public eye. This time the workers were neither all-white nor right-wing and readily found common cause with the Bloombergville protesters.

Building solidarity at home, abroad

Workers World spoke with a participant in the construction trades march, Sherry Cruz, an apprentice member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3: “This is so cool

that we’re getting together with Bloombergville. If we can get united and stay united, we’ll win!”

Bloombergville protesters are mainly young students, but they have been supported by both members and leaders of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Council 37, the Professional Staff Congress of City University of New York, and the Transport Workers Union Local 100. Each group has provided food and other support to the protest encampment.

The activist group Picture the Homeless has played a strong, leading role based on its long experience with this type of protest. PTH has also helped keep the encampment legal in the face of

police harassment.

Lynn Lewis, PTH director, made it clear from the start that as long as tents or other structures are not used, the protest is protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. She provided training for police negotiators, who have defended protesters’ rights repeatedly to members of the New York Police Department, with backing from lawyers and legal observers. The process is described on the BloombergvilleNow.org blogsite:

“As our talented police negotiators have continued to protect the right of Bloombergville to exist, there is one thing that is clear. Bloombergville is more than just a location, it is an idea: an idea that everyone has a say in how the city spends our

Lessons of Wisconsin

Only the class struggle works

By Fred Goldstein

The cutting-edge struggle in Wisconsin against the capitalist anti-labor, pro-austerity offensive suffered a severe legal setback on June 14. The state Supreme Court overturned a permanent injunction against the union-busting bill signed into law March 11 by the reactionary, racist governor, Scott Walker.

The Dane County court, after mass pressure, had issued an injunction against the bill on May 26. But Walker, architect of the so-called “budget repair” bill, had the capitalist class behind him and prevailed in the higher court.

The problem is not just the legal ruling. The basic question to be asked by rank-and-file unionists, leaders in the oppressed communities and militant students and youth, all of whom pushed this great struggle forward, is the following:

How could the organized labor movement and its allies allow a decision by a tiny group of judges in a capitalist court to override the actions and demands of hundreds of thousands of Wisconsin workers — organized and unorganized, employed and unemployed, immigrants, farmers, youth and students, community organiza-

tions — who have been in a high state of mobilization since the Feb. 14 occupation of the Capitol?

This draconian law wipes out collective bargaining by public workers. It establishes the same provisions that prevail in the so-called “right to work” states in the U.S. South. Under associated budget provisions, \$800 million or more will be taken from services for the people — including education, health care, food and housing assistance. Hundreds of millions of dollars will be given to the rich in tax breaks and contracts.

The mobilization of Wisconsin workers for four months was one of the greatest sustained shows of strength and organization by the unions in decades. It inspired solidarity, national and international, and a rise in public support for unions.

The 18 days of occupying the Capitol and mass rallies peaked on March 12, when an estimated 185,000 surrounded the Capitol in Madison.

How can such an unpopular set of laws be imposed on millions in the face of this?

It's not over

It is not too late to ask these questions. One chapter in the Wisconsin struggle

may be over, but the attacks are not. The opportunity to reopen the battle may soon reappear.

The short answer is that the struggle had to move from purely political pressure of mass demonstrations to the direct class struggle, where the government, the bosses and the bankers would either be stopped cold or made to pay a high price.

Great excitement and hope was raised when the Wisconsin South Central Federation of Labor, representing 45,000 workers, voted to support any measures taken by its member unions to prepare for a general strike if the law passed. This vote came after a demonstration of 100,000 at the Capitol two days earlier.

The buzz about a general strike in Wisconsin affected the labor movement around the country. Often radical groups demand the labor movement call a general strike without regard to the conditions. But, for the first time in many years, the actual conditions seemed to be taking shape and a major labor federation actually brought it up.

The next week, on Feb. 26, the demonstrations in Madison increased in size and scope to 150,000. Solidarity demonstrations were held in all 50 states. Delega-

tions came to Madison from far and wide, including a planeload of unionists from Los Angeles.

Using an illegal parliamentary maneuver, the Republicans passed the union-busting law and on March 11 Gov. Walker signed it into law. The next day the largest demonstration yet took place, estimated by the AFL-CIO at 185,000, including a large delegation of Wisconsin farmers on their tractors.

By this time it was crystal clear that no amount of political pressure was going to move Walker, the Republicans or the ruling class behind them.

The demonstrations had reached maximum strength. The law was passed. The ranks and lower-level union officials waited to see, now that the bill had passed, what would be the next step.

One option was to reoccupy the Capitol with massive numbers. The occupation had been ended earlier by a combination of lying and trickery by state and labor officials, who helped coax the student and worker occupiers out of the building.

Would there be encouragement or motion for a general strike? The bill had not been stopped. Now it had to be overturned.

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Courts overturn injunction

Wisconsin workers launch lawsuit, continue protests

By Ben Carroll and Bryan G. Pfeifer
Milwaukee

On June 14 the Wisconsin Supreme Court overturned 4-3 the permanent injunction against the union-busting, so-called “budget repair bill” signed by Gov. Scott Walker on March 11.

In response the Wisconsin AFL-CIO and a broad coalition of workers’ rights organizations filed a federal lawsuit charging that the budget repair bill violates the First and 14th Amendments of the U.S. Constitution by stripping away basic rights to bargain, organize and associate for the purpose of engaging in union activity.

“Not only have Scott Walker and his deep-pocketed corporate allies sought to silence the voices of Wisconsin workers, they have also violated those workers’ constitutional rights,” said Phil Neuenfeldt, president of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO. “Scott Walker has created two classes of public sector workers and that is unconstitutional. When a legislature

discriminates among classes of workers, especially when doing so has more to do with political payback than with any legitimate reasoning, the law has been violated.” (www.wisafcio.org)

The organizations joining the lawsuit include the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 24, AFSCME Council 40, AFSCME Council 48, the American Federation of Teachers, the Wisconsin Education Association Council, the Wisconsin State Employees Union, The Wisconsin State AFL-CIO and the Service Employees, Health Care Wisconsin.

“The suit contends that it is a violation of the U.S. Constitution for a legislature to discriminate among classes of public employees, particularly when doing so does not advance legitimate policy objectives but instead simply rewards political allies and punishes political opponents,” reads a June 15 Wisconsin AFL-CIO press release announcing the lawsuit.

The lawsuit seeks to enjoin the union-busting provisions of the budget repair

there is much in common between the two protests and that people in Spain look forward to the growing protests in the U.S., which will strengthen the global movement against right-wing austerity policies.

The Bloombergville General Assembly, which meets daily, announces plans for marches and rallies in the City Hall area at lunch time and again at 6 p.m. daily. Organizers are reaching out to affected groups and communities, such as daycare centers that are facing drastic cuts, schools and firehouses being shut down because of the Bloomberg budget proposals, and public sector workers facing layoffs.

On June 22 Bloombergvillers plan to join a protest on Wall Street sponsored by National Nurses United and the AFL-CIO. It is the third large-scale union protest in New York in eight days.

The growing intensity of popular resistance is becoming more united. As Cruz said, “If we can get united and stay united, we’ll win!” □



June 14 march at the Madison Capitol includes firefighters.

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

bill, but, in a major capitulation to the bosses and bankers, it doesn’t seek to enjoin the pensions and health care increases in the bill, which are effectively wage cuts, for public sector union workers.

Struggle continues

Late June 11 the legislature announced that it would be meeting to take up the 2011-13 budget in a so-called “extraordinary session” during the coming week, a move that has only been taken 10 times in Wisconsin state history, the last time in 1993. The lawmakers declare this special session of the legislature allows them to suspend even the most basic of legalities of the capitalist political system, including access by the public, notification of what legislation will be taken up, and introduction and passage of new legislation within an hour.

Backed into a corner by the growing, deepening grassroots opposition including daily demonstrations at the Walkerville tent city at the Capitol, the capitalist politicians and their overlords — the bosses and bankers — engaged in an all-out assault to ram through their anti-people 2011-13 budget. As both the Assembly and the Senate of the Wisconsin legislature met for an “extraordinary session” the week of June 12, thousands protested inside and outside the state Capitol in Madison.

To recap, on Feb. 15 the Assembly

passed its version of the budget and the Senate followed on Feb. 16 with provisions that, unless resisted, will have a devastating impact on the people of Wisconsin for generations to come. The budget now awaits Walker’s signature. During the course of the legislative sessions, many were escorted out by cops or arrested for interrupting the kangaroo sessions, including youth who locked themselves to a railing in the Senate chambers and whose locks had to be cut off by the state.

Provisions of the budget passed by the Assembly and Senate include draconian cuts of at least \$800 million to \$1.6 billion in K-12 education and major expansions of school “choice,” as well as hundreds of millions in cuts to health care and other major services for poor and working people. At the same time at least \$300 million will be handed over in tax cuts to the rich. The budget also includes numerous provisions regarding deregulation and privatization, among other provisions unknown to the public at this time due to the way it is being rammed through.

But as has been demonstrated in this struggle time and time again, from the occupation of the Capitol to the Walkerville tent city, the people of Wisconsin throughout the state are prepared to fight and use new tactics and methods to beat back the attacks on working and oppressed people. □

tax money. This is a fight against budget cuts that will lower the quality of life for all New Yorkers. Bloombergville has moved — or been moved — several times since the encampment started Tuesday. We may keep moving, but we’re still here.”

The blog introduction continues: “If you’re a parent whose kids’ school is closing, if you can’t afford medical care, if you live near a fire station that’s shutting down — you’re already living in Bloombergville — so you may as well join us. Come with a sleeping bag to spend the night or come for an hour. We’ll always be somewhere in the shadows of City Hall, 24/7, and we’re not leaving until the budget is defeated. If you’re a New Yorker who wants a city that’s healthy, educated and safe, you’re always welcome here.”

Today a noon-time solidarity delegation visited Bloombergville from Democracia Real Ya!, the group that has led massive protests in Spain for the past few weeks. Cesar Siroco, a spokesperson, told WW

What every worker should know

The union struggle & imperialist war machine

By Gavrielle Gemma

U.S. planes are now dropping bombs on Libya, killing children in an effort to recolonize this part of Africa. This is yet another illegal war. Regardless of who is president, the Pentagon budget grows and the U.S. is in a permanent state of imperialist warfare.

Struggles in the U.S. are being carried out against attacks on every social program, on the right of unions to exist and on immigrants. Foreclosures and unemployment continue to devastate working-class communities and youth, hitting people of color twice or even three times as hard.

It is not just a moral question to connect these issues — it is a necessity for the working class in the fight on economic issues. The roots of militarism and the war on labor both arise out of the capitalist system. The immense funds and power of the financial sector and military-industrial complex are driving reactionary policies here and abroad.

Politics flows from economics. The wars and social and economic assaults result from the deep, continuing, insolvable capitalist crisis on a global scale. Reactionary government policies are devised to fulfill capitalism’s needs.

Capitalism in earlier phases of development — at great cost to the people — eventually came out of its bust cycle and moved into an upturn and boom phase. People went back to work and employment even expanded.

The productive capability of the global workforce today is enormous; it can produce all that humanity needs. However, under capitalism the means of production is privately owned by a small, useless clique that says that unless commodities can be sold for a profit, workers lose their jobs. If there are no sales, there are no profits. The millions of people worldwide who do all the labor are thrown away by a tiny group of parasites. Then no one can afford to buy the products workers create.

Temporarily capitalists can overcome this crisis by imposing speedups, lowering wages and/or moving production to areas where labor is paid the least, thereby reducing costs. They can also force countries to buy U.S. products, while they push to steal the natural resources of countries like Iraq or Libya.

Built-in U.S. war drive

None of this is possible without deadly force and occupation. In “Low-Wage Capitalism,” Fred Goldstein wrote, “The Pentagon, the entire warfare state promotes intervention to insure the protection and continued expansion of corporation inter-

Each recession of the last few decades has not produced a capitalist recovery. The current “jobless recovery,” with its swollen profits, is not just a product of elected officials’ rotten policies. It is the product of a rotten system that is in decay. The struggle against war, militarism, unemployment, union busting, racism, sexism and homophobia needs to be an anti-capitalist struggle.

ests and world-wide wage competition.” Unless production starts up again and people go back to work and have money to buy products, there is no capitalist recovery.

Driving down production costs by cutting wages and benefits at home is not possible without destroying unions and removing social measures that workers fought for long ago. Destroying welfare, unemployment insurance, Social Security, child labor laws, minimum wage protections and attacking immigrants are ways to drive down the wages of all workers. This is all part of the “global race to the bottom.” Just as the Pentagon is the international enforcer, so are the police and the courts in the U.S., which uphold increasingly repressive laws.

Each recession of the last few decades has not produced a capitalist recovery. The current “jobless recovery,” with its swollen profits, is not just a product of elected officials’ rotten policies. It is the product of a rotten system that is in decay. But because production is only for the purpose of selling for profit and workers can no longer buy what they produce, the capitalist system has reached the end of its ability to absorb its enormous productive capacity and create a capitalist recovery.

Exploitation of labor is at the heart of the capitalist system: The super-rich capitalist class profits by paying workers less than the value of what they produce — and stealing the rest. That’s called “surplus value.”

The capitalist class has turned to looting the public treasuries as a major source of their profits. They have instructed the government to privatize everything — turn over public facilities and services to private companies, which are guaranteed profits because the funds come from the public treasury.

In “High Tech, Low Pay,” Sam Marcy, the late chairperson of Workers World Party, wrote, “The capitalist state is not only the collective organ on behalf of the individual capitalist. Insofar as its economic function it appropriates an additional portion of the surplus value, unpaid labor of the workers, beyond what the individual capitalist has the power to do.” It does this by taxing the workers. All the money in every city, state or federal bud-

get comes from labor and belongs to the working class as a whole.

The purpose of warfare is to impose U.S. domination globally in order to ensure the profits of capitalist industry. War is big business. In fact, the arms industry is the biggest business in the U.S. Together with the financial industries that invest in it, the military-industrial complex rules Congress and is the driving force of war, budget cuts and attacks on unions. The Pentagon is not only the thug for the transnational banks and corporations, but the military uses up weapons so that more must be produced.

Military industry: anti-union, racist, sexist

The military sector is the most anti-union, racist, sexist sector of industry. The industry bosses openly advocate super-automation, workerless factories and moving industries from union sites to so-called “right-to-work” (non-union) locations. This sector of industry strongly opposes worker organizing and protests; it has assisted in breaking strikes in the U.S. and globally.

Where civilian industries attempt to minimize production costs to maximize profits, the military industries seek to maximize costs so they get more money from the government. Their profits don’t depend on workers going back to work, but on bleeding public funds dry.

It’s worth repeating what former general and Republican President Dwight Eisenhower said when he left office in 1961. He was a dedicated warmonger and the architect of the fusion of government with the military industries, universities and banks. He was well qualified to issue a warning about the growing Pentagon industry: “The total influence — economic, political even spiritual — is felt in every city, every statehouse, and every office of the federal government. ... We must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. In the counsels of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence whether sought or unsought by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”

The longer the global capitalist recession — and depression in many places — continues, the more the monopoly financial sector and the military sector turn to looting our treasuries as a source of the super-profits they cannot get by traditional means of directly exploiting labor.

The banks are doing to every U.S. city, town and state what the International Monetary Fund has done abroad for decades. They make loans — not for the purpose of development — but to incur indebtedness, which creates profits for the financial industries and robs the treasuries.

For example, New York City, which has a gargantuan budget of \$63 billion a year, is paying out \$7 billion in tax-free interest payments, as the administration callously cuts schools, hospitals, libraries, firehouses, day care and senior centers. New York state has 1,000 authorities, which were created solely to evade laws, that limit direct government indebtedness. They get

loans in the form of bonds, but the treasury is obligated to repay them, as well as any revenues they get from fees or fares.

The military-industrial-banking complex that Eisenhower warned of more than 50 years ago has grown monstrosly since then. The military budget — when all departments are added in — is more than \$1 trillion a year! The government borrows funds from the banks to pay for this. The result is that huge profits from interest payments go to the banks, in addition to the profits they make from investing in war companies. This year the federal government will pay about \$400 billion in interest payments. Altogether, the military-industrial-banking complex loots about 65 percent of the federal budget.

Pentagon’s reach grows

So huge are the super-profits that banks and the military industry control Congress. Their lobbyists write the legislation, which many in Congress don’t even read. Congress members now have \$151 million invested in military companies. (FedSpending.org). In 2006, members of the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committee invested \$44 million. In 2009, war contractors gave 57 percent of their donations to Democrats.

However, that’s only part of it. Military production has taken over from civilian production. Large, medium and small companies — from GM and Chrysler to Dunkin Donuts and Marvel Comics — feed from military budget contracts. Entire towns and counties are dependent on military industries or bases. Prison officials coerce prisoners to do slave labor under Pentagon contracts. The Pentagon makes sure that their contracts are spread out widely.

Pentagon spending in universities is enormous. Its purpose is to influence research and thought and to create loyalty or a dependence on the military by educators, scientists and the institutions themselves. The army owns a multibillion-dollar network of research and development facilities at more than 100 sites worldwide. They do technological research in medicine, microelectronics, photonics and much more.

There are dozens of Pentagon foundations and agencies like Military Technology Advisory Group, Defense Science and Technology Strategy Advisory Group and the Defense Trade Advisor Group, which describes itself as “a cross-section of the U.S. defense industry, trade associations, and academia and foundation personnel.”

Their self-proclaimed goal “is to foster competitiveness in the marketplace to produce a market demand. To support and improve technology and manufacturing readiness levels, to exercise the supply chains that are fundamental to manufacturing, and to fund research and development efforts in areas that need to be more competitive.” (Office of Naval Research) In “High Tech, Low Pay” Marcy quotes General Bernard Weiss of MTAG: “Take the U.S. out of the position that it is in terms of productivity ... and move it back to being pre-eminent in the world.”

Marcy wrote of the “deep and profound shift of the civilian industry toward the military-industrial complex. It strengthens the hand of the Pentagon in its long-standing attempt to become the central organizer of the capitalist economy ... [Note: It’s not just the war industries but also the whole economic policy.] Monopoly capitalism has been steadily and re-

Continued on page 9



PHOTO: DELORES LEMON THOMAS

Cranes and trucks sat idle after workers shut down the ports of San Francisco and Oakland, Calif., on April 4 for 24 hours in national day of solidarity with Wisconsin workers and workers who are fighting union busting to commemorate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Activists speak out as

NATO continues terrorist attacks on Libya

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Two NATO airstrikes on June 19 and 20 exposed even further the criminal nature of the imperialist war against the North African state of Libya. On June 19 NATO forces struck a civilian residential area in Tripoli, the capital, killing nine people in a household, including two children.

The following day NATO bombings of a residential area near Zawiyah in Libya's West killed another 15 civilians. Libyan government spokesperson Musa Ibrahim noted that the attacks in the Surman area included eight rockets that struck five homes and a farm. Ibrahim said one home belonged to government aide Khaled el-Kweldi. Those killed included 6-year-olds Khaleida el-Kweldi and Salam Lanouri, and 4-year-old Khalid el-Kweldi.

A NATO statement claimed that the objective of the June 20 strike was to destroy a military missile site, adding that "it appears that one weapon did not strike the intended target and that there may have been a weapons system failure." NATO Lt.-Gen. Charles Bouchard said the alliance "regrets the loss of innocent lives." (CNN, June 20)

Ibrahim called the NATO attacks "cold-blooded murder. Is this the protection of civilians? Is this really the search for peace and democracy in Libya, to attack peaceful neighborhoods of Tripoli?" (CNN, June 20)

The NATO statement also said that since March 19, there have been more than 11,500 bombing operations over Libya "and every mission is planned and executed with tremendous care to avoid civilian casualties. NATO remains fully committed to this operation." (CNN, June 20)

NATO strikes have killed civilians before, both supporters and opponents of

the government in Tripoli. Also on June 20, NATO strikes hit vehicles in the area around al-Brega and killed opposition combatants from the Western-backed Transitional National Council based in Benghazi. NATO forces characterized the situation around al-Brega as "a particularly complex and fluid battle scenario. We regret any possible loss of life or injuries caused by the unfortunate incident." (CNN, June 20)

Ibrahim holds NATO, U.S. President Barack Obama, British Prime Minister David Cameron, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and others "responsible morally and legally for these murders and crimes."

Opposition to the war on Libya broadens

At a June 15 news conference in New York, Minister Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam; former U.S. Representative and Green Party presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney, who had recently returned from Libya; former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark; and others denounced the US/NATO war against Libya.

The African National Congress Youth League held its congress in Midrand, outside Johannesburg, South Africa. The congress attracted thousands of young people from inside the country and around the African continent. The ANCYL went on record denouncing the attacks against Libya as an imperialist war and criticizing the African leaders who voted for the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, which provided the pseudo-legal rationale for the total military onslaught against the oil-producing state.

Deputy Secretary General Tendai Weinyika of the Pan-African Youth Union, an affiliate of the African Union, who is also a member of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriot Front Youth League, told the thousands of delegates



April 9 march, New York City.

WW PHOTOS: SHARON BLACK

to thunderous applause: "This congress comes at a time when imperialism has raised its ugly head again. Young people should not allow Africa to be sold out for the love of sugar." (South African Mail & Guardian, June 17)

The PAYU spokesperson also criticized the African Union parent body for endorsing Western-backed presidential contender Alassane Ouattara, who took office after a French military coup in Ivory Coast during April. "In Ivory Coast, imperialism was allowed to reign by our African heads of state," she said.

Youth leader Ludwig Hlondze of Ghana's ruling National Democratic Congress referred to Julius Malema, the re-elected president of the ANCYL, when he said, "Africa will continue to support you to make sure that the mineral resources of our continent remain here." (South African Mail & Guardian, June 17)

In the U.S. on June 15, 10 members of the House of Representatives filed suit in federal court against the Obama administration, saying the War Powers Act

of 1973, a Congressional reaction to the mass struggle against the Vietnam War, is being violated. They demanded the White House provide answers regarding the mission and length of the war on Libya.

The administration argued that the military actions against Libya were "limited" and are not considered a war. Yet thousands of people have died in Libya and on the seas offshore.

Anti-war forces in the U.S. have escalated their demands for the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces from the region. The International Action Center in New York has reissued its petition drafted in May demanding that the Congress and the people call the administration to account for violating the War Powers Act.

Thousands of people have responded to the IAC petition. Its impact has prompted action and debate from various political wings of the Congress. A CBS News polls showed that 60 percent of the people in the U.S. oppose the war. (Telephone poll June 3-7) The onslaught has no public mandate. □

lently fusing with the capitalist state for decades and is intertwined with the military in a thousand ways."

The stronger the military gets the more reactionary will domestic policies be. The more the U.S. military invades, occupies and sets up bases in other countries, the poorer the workers in that country will be and the more pressure will be exerted to cut wages and jobs in the U.S.

Build international solidarity

Workers — those in unions and the unorganized — are connected to our sisters and brothers in the working class around the world. We need international solidarity, and it is in the interest of every union and every worker to oppose all Pentagon wars. All their wars are waged solely to exploit and oppress working people around the world. Our loyalty is to our class and not to the capitalist class, which will throw us out on the street, impoverish, starve and imprison us.

As we explore new avenues of struggle together, we need to analyze what is driving these assaults. The struggle against war, militarism, unemployment, union busting, racism, sexism and homophobia need to be an anti-capitalist struggle. Tactics and strategies need to be implemented that build the power of working-class organizations, unions and community groups to challenge the system — and to occupy and take back what the capitalist ruling class is stealing from us. □



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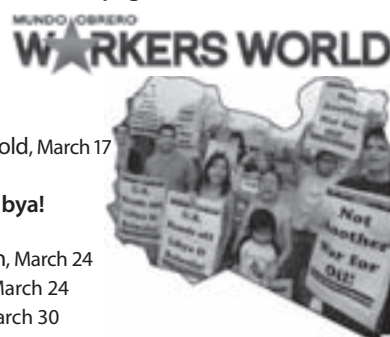
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ATMs, jobs & profits

Every worker knows that the “economic recovery” has been jobless. President Barack Obama has caught a lot of flak for admitting it. Obama told Ann Curry on NBC’s “Today Show” on June 14, “There are some structural issues with our economy where a lot of businesses have learned to become much more efficient with a lot fewer workers. You see it when you go to a bank and you use an ATM. You don’t go to a bank teller. Or you go to the airport and you’re using a kiosk instead of checking at the gate.”

Republicans and much of the capitalist media immediately pounced on Obama’s comments. The president was mocked for allegedly being against ATMs and “economic progress.”

What’s the real story? “The economy is producing as much as it was before the downturn, but with 7 million fewer jobs. Since the recovery began, businesses’ spending on employees has grown 2 percent as equipment and software spending has swelled 26 percent, according to the Commerce Department. ... Corporate profits, meanwhile, are at record highs, and companies are hoarding cash.” (New York Times, June 9)

Banks and airlines install ATMs and kiosks not to help people but to cut jobs. In the last three years banks have cut 52,000 teller jobs! (MarketWatch, June 16)

Banks make billions of dollars from rip-off ATM fees that have reached \$3 or more at West Coast banks. That’s a 15 percent bank tax for somebody withdrawing 20 bucks.

JPMorgan Chase has been charging 44,000 jobless Tennesseans as much as a dollar for accessing their unemployment benefits. (The Tennessean, June 18)

In many countries, including Brazil, France, Ghana and Sri Lanka, bank workers have unions and play an important role in the labor movement. But in the United States, 99 percent of bank employees don’t have union protection.

That’s why, according to the Bureau of

Labor Statistics, the average teller’s wage was just \$12.01 per hour in May 2010. It’s not accidental that in 2009 women held 87 percent of these low-paid jobs.

Neither President Obama nor the Republican bigots object to JPMorgan Chase Bank CEO Jamie Dimon being paid \$41.2 million in 2006. That’s equal to what 1,649 bank tellers were getting four year later.

Black and Latino/a workers had to fight to be hired by banks. Akron’s first African-American Clerk of Courts — Ethel Black — was also the city’s first Black bank teller. Linda Torrence became the first Black teller at First National Bank in Little Rock in 1962.

Under socialism, technology will be used to make work easier and to shorten the work week. Robots will be developed to perform the most dangerous jobs. With socialist economic planning, everybody will be guaranteed a good paying job. There was no unemployment in the former Soviet Union.

So much of capitalist technology was developed to smash unions. Airlines installed kiosks in order to get rid of unionized ticket agents. Karl Marx pointed this out in 1847.

“From 1825 onwards, almost all the new inventions were the result of collisions between the worker and the employer who sought at all costs to depreciate the worker’s specialized ability. After each new strike of any importance, there appeared a new machine,” Marx wrote in “The Poverty of Philosophy.”

Joseph Schumpeter, a capitalist economist, called the wholesale abolishing of jobs to be “creative destruction.” The wealthy strangled Detroit economically in revenge for the militancy of Black workers.

Workers and oppressed people need to creatively destroy the capitalist system. In fighting back against austerity, Greek workers are in the forefront of showing the way forward for poor and working people everywhere. □

U.S. flouts Pakistani sovereignty, arouses anger

By Gene Clancy

A report alleging that a Pakistani army major was among five CIA informers arrested for gathering intelligence on Osama bin Laden’s compound has raised a hue and cry in Pakistan, and has further strained already tenuous relations between the U.S. and Pakistani governments.

“If a serving officer was reporting to the CIA instead of his own officers, that would be a great breach of discipline,” says security analyst and retired Gen. Talat Masood. (Christian Science Monitor, June 18)

The June 16 New York Times reported that an army major provided information such as license plate numbers of vehicles entering the bin Laden compound in Abbottabad prior to the raid. Pakistan’s army tersely refuted the report, stating in a press release, “There is no army officer detained and the story is false and totally baseless.”

However, an unnamed Pakistani newspaper editor told the Christian Science Monitor that a senior civil administrator from Abbottabad also confirmed the arrests and said they took place in a house owned by an army major.

Unprecedented criticism amid series of setbacks

The reported arrests are the latest in a series of major setbacks to the Pakistani army’s public image, which have brought about calls for greater civilian oversight over military and intelligence affairs.

The image of the army as the protector of Pakistani sovereignty has been savaged not only by the recent illegal raid and killing of bin Laden, but by a vicious campaign of bombing of Pakistani territory by remote-controlled U.S. drone aircraft that has killed many civilians. There was also the release earlier this year of a U.S. CIA operative who had been charged with the murder of two Pakistani civilians.

Both the Pakistani army and government have denounced the drone attacks. Yet a WikiLeaks report released in May cited a 2008 secret U.S. State Department

cable in which Pakistan’s top army general asked for even more drones in order to “help during military operations.” (ABC News, May 20)

Meanwhile, a recent Pew Research Center poll finds that just 11 percent of Pakistanis have a favorable view of the U.S., up one point from 2002. (Los Angeles Times, June 18)

One of the most jealously guarded prerogatives of a capitalist nation is sovereignty, the right to control one’s own territory. It is a right that imperialist powers like the United States fiercely claim for themselves, but regularly violate when dealing with oppressed nations.

As an example of this imperialist arrogance, some within the U.S. government are openly calling for the U.S. to cut off military aid to Pakistan because they believe the Pakistanis are not giving up enough of their sovereignty or giving the U.S. a free enough hand to operate with impunity within their territory. On June 14, the House Appropriations Committee approved a defense spending bill that would authorize Congress to withhold 75 percent of a \$1.1-billion aid package for Pakistan.

However, voices in the Obama administration, such as Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, have expressed concerns about any action that may further antagonize the Pakistanis at a time when the U.S. is bogged down in a losing war in Afghanistan. (Los Angeles Times, June 18)

Left out of all of these discussions are the masses of poor and oppressed Pakistani people who have to endure bombing and covert operations by foreign troops. They also suffer depredations from their national armed forces, which often operate outside the control of the civilian government and are engaged in many business ventures. Pakistanis also face crushing poverty and exploitation in what remains an underdeveloped economy.

The conflict between two groups that are enemies of the people is just further evidence that the U.S. and NATO should get out of Pakistan and Afghanistan. □

Lessons of Wisconsin

Only the class struggle works

Continued from page 7

The struggle needed to be escalated.

The Wisconsin South Central Federation of Labor website published a detailed explanation of how the labor movement in Ontario, Canada, had from 1995 to 1998 carried out 11 Days of Action. These general strikes had defeated union busting and a harsh austerity program. (scfl.org)

Leaders of the Ontario struggle described in detail such things as how to overcome divisions among the unions and how to build alliances with community organizations and social movements. It showed how to set up strike committees with co-chairs from the unions and the community. This is most important in Wisconsin because, while the center of struggle was in Madison, the Black, Latino/a community and immigrant communities, documented and undocumented, would be central to the success of any statewide struggle against the government.

Educating white workers on solidarity with the oppressed communities would be key. The Ontario labor leadership showed how to carry out a protracted campaign to educate union members in meeting

halls, homes, bars and donut shops. It went over how to bridge the different organizing styles of community groups and unions, how to deal with the government, the cops, the bosses, the media and so on.

It described how to set up transportation, emergency and medical services; train pickets; map out the cities; create short- and long-term plans; set up a general staff to organize and run the strike.

Most important were the examples of how the Canadian movement refused to recognize that violating workers’ rights was “legal” and instead declared the struggle legal.

Thus, while the union leadership in this country had basically no experience in calling a general strike, a wealth of information was available on how to go about it.

However, on the Wisconsin website, right next to the document on the general strike, was a memorandum on legal rights virtually declaring that any move toward a general strike or any other strike against the state was illegal and put the union and its members in jeopardy of fines and arrests.

The labor leadership in Wisconsin, in the crunch, was silent on the general

strike. Instead it turned its attention to the movement to recall Republican legislators and to the prospect of having the law overturned in the courts.

The entire weight of the decision to call a general strike cannot be left on the shoulders of state leaders alone. In such a momentous decision, the state and local leadership must know they are challenging the entire ruling class. It was incumbent on the national labor leadership to declare openly that it would wholeheartedly support such a crucial struggle, where the fate of public employees is at stake. While AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka appeared at support rallies, he never once pointed in the direction of the class struggle, hewing to the line of support for the Democratic Party.

The workers were not defeated in some great class battle with the capitalist state. The setback came about because the labor leaders would not use the strength, energy and determination exhibited by the workers to overcome false claims of capitalist “legality” handed down by the legislature and the courts. Instead, the leaders bowed to capitalist rulings.

There is nothing wrong in principle

with using the recall method to get rid of reactionary legislators, nor to use the courts on occasion to enforce the rights of the working class.

What is wrong, however, is to rely on these methods. Parliamentary and judicial methods can at best be secondary when the struggle is with the capitalist class and its state. Only the class struggle, which challenges the class power of the bosses and their state, can bring any significant, lasting victory in the struggle.

The only way to get there is for the rank and file of the labor movement to organize from the ground up, build caucuses to promote the class struggle against the bosses and their state and either force the union leaders to fight or push them aside and take the unions over from below. □

LOW-WAGE CAPITALISM

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By Fred Goldstein

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GREECE, SPAIN

Workers & youth fight bankers' offensive



Greek protest, June 5.

Continued from page 1

services and thus defend the common European currency.

It is true there is a financial and economic crisis that has brought massive unemployment. But the “austerity measures” are the major European — and U.S. — banks’ strategy not to end unemployment but to collect payments on public loans and assure profits for finance capital. To do this, the European bankers have three instruments: the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and the European Central Bank. Popular organizations fighting to defend the social programs call these three bodies “The Troika.”

The Troika has threatened the governments on Europe’s economic periphery — Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Spain and Iceland especially — that it will withhold loans unless the governments severely cut social programs.

The Troika is a threat first and foremost to the working class but also to the very sovereignty of the countries it moves in on. It imposes austerity. It forces privatization of state-owned industry. The Troika serves banks located mainly in France and Germany, the dominant imperialist powers in the Eurozone.

Last year’s austerity program in Greece did nothing to resolve the debt crisis and only increased the unemployment rate, now officially at more than 16 percent. Spain’s is 21 percent.

This bankers’ attack in Europe has similarities to the one against U.S. cities and states, where local public budgets are being cut to the bone while money is used first to pay banks for bonds. In both places, the bosses and bankers are aggressively waging class struggle through an austerity program that makes the workers pay the costs to bail out the banks.

The attack is also similar to the Structural Adjustment Programs that the IMF and World Bank imposed on countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia during the 1980s and 1990s after financial crises that hit hardest outside the imperialist centers of the U.S., Western Europe and Japan. These programs often threw the most vulnerable sectors of the indebted societies into hunger and misery.

In Europe, this offensive is most brutal in the periphery, and the resistance too is strongest there, right now in Greece and Spain.

Hundreds of thousands march in Spain

Somewhere between a half-million and a million people demonstrated in more than 50 cities in the Spanish state, in every region, on June 19 to oppose the re-

gime in office and its version of austerity and to demand a future for the youth.

Starting May 15, a youthful movement including many young workers and unemployed — along with anyone who wanted to struggle — grew up outside the major unions and parliamentary political parties. The role of the union leadership in Spain differs from that in Greece. After one general strike last September, the leaders of the two major union confederations in the Spanish state made an agreement with the government and have deserted the struggle.

Disgusted with nearly all political leaders and distrustful of most union leadership, young people — who face official unemployment of about 45 percent — occupied the main squares of dozens of cities, staying there in many cases for three to four weeks. Participants made organizational decisions in popular assemblies held in these squares. Their final meetings called for massive mobilizations on June 19, with demands that added up to “Let the rich pay for their crisis,” “No cuts to pensions” and “We want a future.”

Six separate marches came from different neighborhoods in Madrid to gather for a massive rally in Neptune Square. Marches also joined to fill Plaza Catalunya in Barcelona, and there are reports that another 80,000 people marched in Valencia. Significant protests also took place in Gijon in Asturias, Bilbao and Donastia in the Basque Country, Seville in Andalusia, Vigo and Coruña in Galicia — to name a few. (diagonalperiodico.net, June 20) □

On the Picket Line

Support nuclear workers locked out for a year

Continued from page 5

Though Honeywell claims it needed the drastic cutbacks to stay profitable, the corporation continues to rake in huge profits, while recently awarding its CEO a multi-million-dollar raise. No surprise, Honeywell’s goal is to break the union. Meanwhile it’s spending millions on untrained scabs who continue to have contamination accidents that endanger the entire community. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission investigated the most recent accident on May 23. (www.usw7-669.com) Members of Local 7-669 have also gone to Madison, Wis., to defend collective bargaining rights for public sector workers. Clearly, these workers understand the meaning of solidarity. All out to support Local 7-669 on June 25! □

BELGRADE

Provocative NATO summit draws angry protests

Despite its recent failures in imposing stable colonial rule in Afghanistan or subduing the legitimate government of Libya, NATO went ahead with a high-level meeting in Belgrade, Serbia, in mid-June. This slap in the face to the people of the Balkans drew angry opposition.

About 200 top military officers from 55 countries met June 13-15 in Belgrade at NATO’s annual Strategic Military Partner Conference. This organization’s goal is to bring the militaries of the former East European and Balkan socialist states into a subservient role in the imperialist military alliance.

Many people of the former Yugoslav capital were unable to erase the memory of the brutal NATO aggression against their country 12 years earlier. On June 10, the Movement for Serbia presented more than 3,000 signatures protesting the NATO meeting at a news conference where the group said it would support all public protests.

During the NATO meeting, the same alarm went off throughout the capital that was used during the U.S.-led NATO bombing that went on for 78 days in 1999. Observers said it brought back memories of the bombing that killed 3,500 people and destroyed much of the industrial infrastructure of Serbia. Former govern-

ment buildings that were bombed then still remain ruins in the center of the city.

Hundreds of people demonstrated in Pioneer Park at the call of the Serbian Radical Party. Some of the signs they carried were “NATO = crime” and “The killer returns to the scene of the crime.” Police attacked this demonstration.

Another rally was jointly held by the Democratic Party of Serbia, the Center for Strategic Alternatives, the Active Center civic organization and Slobodan Jovanovic Foundation under the slogan, “This is not a NATO state.” The DPS is Vojislav Kostunica’s party; that even this party would be protesting shows how far the Serbian regime has submitted to Western rule since 1999.

Kostunica was the first Western-backed replacement for Slobodan Milosevic and came to power in a coup following a contested election in the fall of 2000. At the time, the Western media painted Kostunica and his party as democratic saviors, but the NATO powers saw his government only as the first step toward the recolonization of the region. All talk of “democracy” was pure imperialist demagoguery.

Observers report that the demonstrators against the NATO meeting also protested NATO’s current bombing campaign against Libya.

— John Catalinotto

One cheer for Italian vote

By John Catalinotto

Italy, the West European country with the largest debt burden, is showing signs of a change in political mood. The strikes have not been as dramatic as those in Greece, and youth aren’t seizing the plazas across the country, but for the first time in years the vote has been going against media magnate President Silvio Berlusconi and his rightist allies.

Following a setback for the Berlusconi coalition — and Berlusconi himself — in local elections, there was an even more surprising result in four referenda on June 13. Two of them prevented the privatization of water. Another said no to nuclear energy, something Berlusconi has been pushing. The fourth abolished the special privilege allowing the prime minister to delay criminal trials based on alleged political responsibilities.

To win referenda in Italy, more than half the voters must vote. The strategy of Berlusconi and his ally Umberto Bossi

of the racist, anti-immigrant Northern League was to discourage voting. It failed. Some 57 percent voted, and about 94 percent voted against Berlusconi, since many of his regular voters abstained.

This is a good sign, but only a sign. The main opposition party in Italy, the Democratic Party, like the DP in the U.S., can be expected to continue both the war against Libya and to apply austerity to the workers at home. Even if the rightist parties are voted out in the next national election, this doesn’t mean relief for the workers in Italy. That’s what the record shows in Portugal, Greece and Spain, where center-left governments carry out austerity and war.

Like a poll, the referenda show a mood to confront authority. In the atmosphere of mass actions in Greece and Spain, it raises hopes that the spark might jump to Italy. It will have to in order to confront what is sure to be a continuation of the bankers’ attack on the working class in Europe. □

NATO in the Balkans Voices of Opposition

by Ramsey Clark and others Confused about the real reasons the U.S. bombed Yugoslavia? This book, released in 1998, will give you the secret background and hidden role of the U.S. and Germany in the dismemberment of Yugoslavia. NATO in the Balkans shows how “Big Lie” war propaganda nearly silenced popular debate and opposition. Authors former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Sean Gervasi, Sara Flounders, Thomas Deichmann, Gary Wilson and Nadja Tesich will take you through the ins and the outs, the framework and media lies that led to the series of bloody conflicts that have characterized central Europe in the last years of this century. International Action Center, 1998, paperback, 230pp, index



Hidden Agenda: U.S./NATO Takeover of Yugoslavia

By Ramsey Clark and various authors

Washington and NATO strategists invoked humanitarian principles to justify their war. But they practiced the divide-and-conquer tactics used by empires since the days of imperial Rome. Behind the facade of concern for self-determination, they sliced away most of the republics of Yugoslavia, one by one, through economic pressure, political threats and, finally, outright warfare. International Action Center, 2002, Paperback, 408pp, Maps, Photographs, Index.

Books available at amazon.com

Sindicatos ayudan a los/as damnificados/as por el tornado en Alabama

Por Deirdre Griswold

Algunos de los primeros que respondieron después de los tornados devastadores que azotaron a Alabama a finales de abril fueron los/as sindicalistas. En cuestión de horas los sindicatos locales habían abierto sus oficinas a las comunidades, organizaron trabajo de socorro y comenzaron a recolectar fondos para proporcionar alimentos y agua a las personas cuyas casas habían sido demolidas por las monstruosas tormentas.

Desde entonces, los sindicatos han ofrecido asistencia continua a los/as sobrevivientes de los tornados, ayudando a derribar las viviendas dañadas y limpiando los escombros.

Inmediatamente después de que los tornados golpearan, los/as trabajadores/as siderúrgicos de Fairfield en Alabama,

se pusieron en acción, recaudando más de \$30.000 en las fábricas para ayudar a los/as sobrevivientes. Proporcionaron ayuda, hielo y otros suministros a la zona de Pleasant Grove / Concord. El Local 2122 del sindicato siderúrgico USW abrió su sede sindical a la comunidad.

Otras locales sindicales también establecieron centros de ayuda. Voluntarios de la industria de la construcción realizaron tareas de socorro, así como de limpieza. Más de 150 voluntarios/as ayudaron a limpiar los daños, utilizando sus propias motosierras, excavadoras, un camión grúa, “y su generoso espíritu colectivo”. (National Organized Labor Journal, edición del mes de mayo)

Trabajadores Electricistas (IBEW) recogieron, cocinaron y entregaron alimentos por toda la región.

Los/as miembros del sindicato de

trabajadores/as de tiendas, RWDSU, también cocinaron y proporcionaron alimentos en la ciudad de Pratt.

Los locales de la Federación Americana de Maestros llevaron suministros, mientras que los/as miembros del Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Comunicación contestaban los teléfonos y ayudaban a distribuir la comida.

Terry Davis, el encargado del enlace con la comunidad de la AFL-CIO de Alabama Central dijo: “He estado en el movimiento obrero desde 1998 y viendo a más de 150 de mis hermanos y hermanas sindicalistas unirse para ayudarse unos a otros y a sus comunidades, es el momento de más orgullo en mi vida sindical”.

Para el 21 de mayo, informa Davis, los locales sindicales estaban todavía abiertos para compartir los alimentos recogidos y otros artículos con las comu-

nidades. Ese sábado, los sindicatos organizaron un día de trabajo, y por lo menos 150 personas se congregaron en Pleasant Grove y la ciudad de Pratt para remover escombros.

El 9 de junio, una reunión del ayuntamiento en Bessemer, Alabama, en la que los funcionarios federales respondían a preguntas del público “rápidamente se calentó”, reportó el Birmingham News.

“Un hombre dijo a la Agencia Federal de Manejo de Emergencias que no había hecho nada por él. Otro hombre dijo que cada vez recibe diferentes respuestas a preguntas de las distintas agencias de ayuda federal”.

Esta es otra razón por la que los/as trabajadores/as tienen que gobernar este país, en vez de los banqueros, la patronal y los políticos comprados. □

Trabajadores/as de la GE protestan concesiones

Por Dante Strobino

Nota de la redacción: El 19 de junio el CCN llegó a un acuerdo tentativo con la GE. Durante los próximos días se consultarán a todos los sindicatos envueltos que con sus miembros decidirán el resultado final. Al final de este proceso WW-MO dará a conocer más detalles.

Más de 3.500 trabajadores/as de varias fábricas de la General Electric provenientes de más de 20 estados, se reunieron en el Centro Hammermill en la Universidad de Gannon en Erie, Pensilvania, el 4 de junio. Las consignas de solidaridad y el espíritu de resistencia frente a la avaricia corporativa de la GE llenaban la sala.

La manifestación fue organizada por el Local 506 del sindicato United Electrical Workers (Trabajadores Unidos de la Electricidad), que representa a más de 2.300 trabajadores/as en Erie, en la fábrica más grande de la GE en EE.UU. Fue un espectáculo impresionante de unidad entre los/as trabajadores/as de los 11 sindicatos que organizan a los/as trabajadores/as de la GE representados por el Comité Coordinado de Negociación (CCN).

Hasta las camisetas de los/as trabajadores/as mostraban la militancia. Estaban decoradas con imágenes de perros feroces y tejones con colmillos. Miembros de la división de Trabajadores de la Comunicación del sindicato de electricistas (IUE-CWA) de lugares tan lejanos como Louisville, Kentucky, llevaban camisetas que anunciaban: “Manos fuera de nuestros beneficios de salud”.

“Este es un ataque contra tres generaciones, nadie está a salvo”, dijo Ric Casilli, agente de negocios del Local 201 de la IUE-CWA en la planta de la GE en Lynn, Massachusetts. Su discurso militante provocó gritos de la multitud. “No están dejando a nadie — nadie se salvará — jubilados, trabajadores actuales y futuros empleados”, dijo.

Casilli recordó a la multitud que la GE



MO/WW FOTO: DANTE STROBINO

Erie, Pensilvania, 4 de junio.

obtuvo ganancias récord de US \$14 mil millones el año pasado y no pagó ningún impuesto.

“Muchos de ustedes han estado movilizándose en sus talleres”, dijo Roger Zaczek, presidente del Local 506 del UE. “Les digo que en Nueva York les están escuchando a Uds. muy claramente”. Se refería a las acciones recientes en los lugares de trabajo y las reuniones en las instalaciones de la GE por todo el país.

Jim Clark, presidente nacional del IUE-CWA y presidente del CCN, dijo a la multitud que lo vitoreaba que su sindicato había dedicado \$400 millones de dólares de su fondo de huelga para ponerlo a disposición de los/as miembros del sindicato en caso de que rechacen la oferta final de contrato de la GE a mediados de junio y salgan en huelga.

Hubo también una poderosa demostración de solidaridad internacional en la manifestación. Andrew Dinkelaker, presidente de la UE en la Región Oriental, dijo que el sindicato había recibido recientemente cartas de sindicatos y federaciones de trabajadores/as en 12 países que representan a 40 millones de trabajadores/as, expresando su solidaridad con los sindicatos del CCN en su lucha con la GE.

Dinkelaker mostró un video con declaraciones y cartas del Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos de BH (CUT de Brasil), del Sindicato de Comunicación, Energía y Papel de Canadá, la Unión de Trabajadores

Automovilísticos de Canadá, y de sindicatos mexicanos, incluyendo a Stumam, Sintrametlife, STRACC, Stimahca y al Frente Auténtico del Trabajo.

También hubo mensajes de solidaridad de la Federación Internacional de Sindicatos de la Química, Energía, Minas e Industrias Diversas; la Federación Internacional de Trabajadores de las Industrias Metalúrgicas; los Trabajadores Metalúrgicos de Francia; la Nueva Iniciativa Sindical de la India; del Kilusang Mayo Uno de Filipinas; de Zennoren, la Confederación Nacional de Sindicatos en Japón y de la Unión Nacional de Trabajadores Metalúrgicos de Sudáfrica.

Sindicatos oponen resistencia en negociaciones

El CCN, que representa cerca de 15.000 trabajadores/as, está actualmente negociando un contrato nacional laboral con la GE en la Cd. de Nueva York, siendo la GE una de las corporaciones más grandes del mundo. Esto sucede en una época cuando los/as trabajadores/as y la gente oprimida por todo el país están bajo un ataque brutal de los súper-ricos corporativos que están intentando socavar a los sindicatos y reducir los empleos, los sueldos y los beneficios de los/as trabajadores/as.

A pesar de que sus ganancias en el 2010 fueron las más altas en su historia, la GE intenta explotar aún más a sus trabajadores/as y está tratando despiadadamente de forzarlos/as a aceptar grandes concesiones en sueldos, seguros de salud, planes de pensiones, en la Opción Especial de Jubilación Temprana y en otros. La compañía está presionando para establecer contratos a dos niveles, los cuales resultarían en sueldos más bajos y menos beneficios para los/as trabajadores/as nuevos/as.

Sin embargo, los/as trabajadores/as de la GE son sumamente productivos/as. No es sorprendente que ningún funcionario

corporativo haya dicho la verdad: que son los/as trabajadores/as los/as verdaderamente responsables por crear las ganancias récord de la GE. Cada trabajador/a de la GE creó alrededor de \$42.000 en ganancias para la compañía en 2010.

La GE es tan despiadada, que durante estas negociaciones la compañía hizo alarde de la eliminación del 50 por ciento de los empleos sindicalizados en la GE en EE.UU entre 2000 y 2011. Wayne Burnett, el agente de negocios del Local 506 del UE subrayó que mientras que la GE pide concesiones de sueldos a los/as trabajadores/as, no oyó que ningún representante de la compañía criticara la bonificación de \$11 millones regalada al ejecutivo principal Jeffrey Immelt. (www.ueunion.org, 9 de junio)

Otro problema con el cual el sindicato y los/as trabajadores/as tienen que lidiar es la construcción por la GE de una nueva fábrica para producir locomotoras en la ciudad de Fort Worth, Tejas, lugar conocido por su anti sindicalismo y bajos sueldos.

Las negociaciones contractuales están ahora en su tercera semana. Un acuerdo tentativo se espera para el 19 de junio. Entonces los/as trabajadores/as sindicalizados/as nacionalmente tendrán que decidir si aceptan o rechazan el contrato.

El UE y los otros sindicatos del CCN están muy conscientes de los feroces ataques de hoy en día en contra los/as trabajadores/as y los sindicatos, y también están muy conscientes de la necesidad de permanecer fuertes en contra de las concesiones.

La asamblea en Erie demostró el espíritu de unidad y lucha de los sindicatos que representan a los/as trabajadores/as de la GE. No puede enfatizarse suficientemente que la lucha de los/as trabajadores/as y miembros de la comunidad en contra de los ataques contra los sindicatos en Wisconsin es lo que ha inspirado al movimiento a luchar contra los ataques de las corporaciones y sus representantes en el gobierno.

Para noticias sobre las negociaciones y la lucha del contrato, vea el sitio del UE en www.ueunion.org/unity2011.html. □